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The Tenant Farmer

More Than a Trade Union or Farm Journal
Devoted to Extending Democracy On the Home Front

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Planters Refuse Tenants Right to Take Part In Food Program

H. L. Mitchell, General Secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, was invited by Congressman John H. Tolan, Chairman of the House Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, to appear at a hearing being held at Huntsville, Alabama, Friday, May 8.

In a prepared statement Mitchell said that it was evident that there now existed a shortage of labor for peak seasons of employment on the farms in sections of the South where war industries are in operation or in the process of construction.

While admitting that it may become necessary to send workers from the towns and cities into the fields to cultivate and harvest crops, he urged that the resources of people still on the land be mobilied before any such step is taken.

In this statement to the Committee the Secretary of the Union pointed out that there were many areas of the South like the black belt of Alabama which had gone in for livestock farming, that there was still on the land a stranded excess farm population that ought to be induced to migrate permanently.

He also urged the adoption by Congress of a minimum wage law for farm labor as the first requirement for maintaining agricultural production. He said that a bill which was sponsored by the Southern Tenant Farmers Union had been introduced in Congress over a year ago to provide for minimum wages and the regulation of other conditions of employment on the farms. This measure, "The Langer Bill S. 1335," is still pending and preliminary hearings have been held bf the Senate Education and Labor Committee.

Mitchell also stated that there were over 2,000,000 small farmers, tenants, and sharecroppers in the South who constituted America's greatest potential resource for agricultural production but that in order to bring their productive capacity up to the extent needed today these people need both equipment and supervision.

Stating that the agency of the government responsible for mobilization of the resources of these people is the Farm Security Administration, Mitchell charged that the American Farm Bureau purporting to represent the interest of 168,000 organized southern farmers was chiefly responsible for the attempt to destroy the effectiveness of this agency.

Quoting a statement given him by a sharecropper in Eastern Arkansas who claimed his landlord refused to allow him to participate in the Food for Freedom program by raising 5 acres of peanuts he had signed up to grow, Mitchell urged that the Department of Agriculture be required to make public the names of plantation owners who were refusing to increase production of needed food crops.

He further recommended to the Congressional Committee that surveys be made of both seasonal and regular farm labor needs in all sections of the country with a distinction made between industrialized farms and those owned by small farmers. He also recommended that

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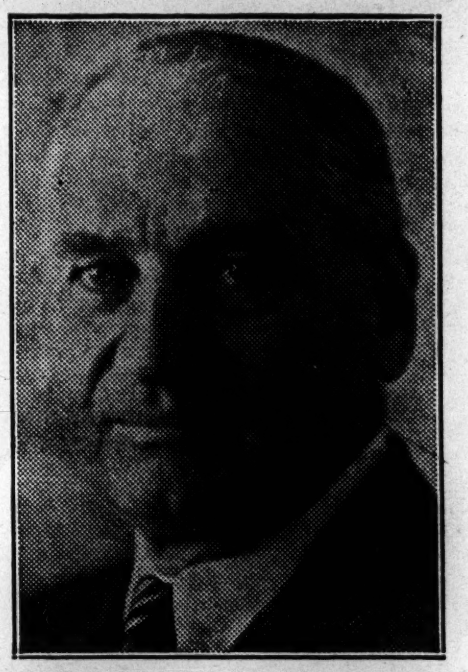
Sharecroppers' Friend



Seated In U. S. Senate

After a long fight Senator William Langer of North Dakota has been seated for a full six years term in the United States Senate. The Senator, who came to Arkansas and Missouri in August of 1941 to speak at Union meetings, had his election contested. Among the charges lodged against Langer was that he used his power while Governor of North Dakota to protect the interests of farmers. He used the state troops to stop foreclosures of mortgages on farms and also placed an embargo on wheat preventing it from being shipped out of the state until it reached a price satisfactory to farmers.

U. S. May Enlist School Boys And Girls for Farm Work

Plans to send high school boys and girls to the farms for work during vacation time have just been announced in Washington. Paul V. McNutt in charge of War Manpower, stated that "Loss of regular farm workers to war industry and to the army and navy has resulted in shortages of labor for farm work in some parts of the country. Young people, both boys and girls, may be needed to work in the fields during crop emergencies."

He added that "this does not mean that students should flock to the farms in search of work. Recruiting and employment of young people must be planned carefully in order to protect their health and welfare and at the same time meet the farmers' needs." Further he said that the U. S. Employment Service was responsible for seeing to it that boys and girls are sent to work on the farm only when there are not enough regular farm workers available.

Plans are also underway for setting up groups of volunteer farm workers composed of such students.

No plans were announced for requiring decent wages or to prevent these young people from being used to keep farm wages at low levels.

Alabama STFU Members Set Up Co-Operative Association

Marketing and Buying Underway

On April 25th a group of farmers met at the Hopewell Church in Colbert County, Alabama, to set up the first co-operative marketing and purchasing association ever established by members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

Representing various locals in the state these members: small farm owners, tenants, sharecroppers and farm laborers, both white and Negro, became the Incorporators of the Alabama Farmers Co-operative Association. They elected J. B. Campbell of Center Star, A. L. Porter of Spruce Pine, Roy E. Raley of Lagrange, Hop Thompson and M. F. Gargis of Spring Valley as the Board of Directors. J. B. Campbell was designated as President and Roy E. Raley as Secretary-Treasurer of the Association.

The incorporators adopted by-laws for the operation of the Alabama Farmers Co-operative Association that limits the benefits of co-operative buying and selling to those heads of families who maintain their membership in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. The Declaration of Incorporation was filed with Probate Judge of Colbert County and a Charter was applied for under the laws of the State of Alabama on May 1st. A permit to operate the Co-operative Association's business was likewise secured from the State Department of Agriculture in Montgomery.

The incorporation of the Association by these members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union is the outgrowth of a movement started in the state early last fall to purchase cooperatively winter supplies through buying clubs established in local unions.

Reports of increased co-operative buying by members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union in all states where we have organization came in during the months of November and December of 1941. The Annual Convention held in Sheffield in January of this year adopted a resolution instructing officers of the Union to sponsor co-operative activities and in early March Roy E. Raley, President, living and working on a farm in the Lagrange community, began acting as an agent for members of the Union arranging for co-operative buying of supplies, seed, feed and fertilizer. During the months of March and April a business of over $2,500 was done on a co-operative basis. Savings of over $300 were made by these members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union on purchases of supplies.

Arrangements have also been worked out for selling farm products in the Tri-Cities of the Muscle Shoals district. President Raley reports that some twenty merchants, hotel and restaurant owners have signed agreements to purchase in so far as possible all vegetables, fruits, poultry, and dairy products direct from the farmers who are members of the Union. About 800 dozen eggs have been sold in the past two months as well as several hundred pounds of fryers. The co-operative marketing is just getting underway.

Labor Union members have also become interested in buying their food products direct

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Farm Bureau In South Exposed As a Racket; STFU Demands Investigation by Government

Charges Supported By Affidavits of 100 Farmers In Three Southern States

The Southern Tenant Farmers Union on May 4 made public a report entitled "The American Farm Bureau in the South."

Accompanied by a brief of affidavits secured from 100 farmers in Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi, the report was sent to Claude R. Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture, and to Senator Robert M. LaFollette with a request for an official investigation of the activities of the Farm Bureau which in 1941 reported a membership of 168,474 members in the eleven southern states.

The report in full follows:

The Farm Bureau In the South

INTRODUCTION

The farmers of the nation have been called upon to increase production in the "Food for Freedom Program." Here in the South are over 2,000,000 farm families who, if they were given an opportunity to do so, could play an important role in helping win the war by raising food crops necessary to feed the men in the armed forces and the war industries. These families, most of whom do not own the land upon which they live, do not have the equipment or training needed for production of crops other than cotton. However, over 400,000 of these low income farm families, who are small farmers, tenants and sharecroppers, have since the beginning of the Farm Security Administration's program of rehabilitation greatly increased their capacity to produce crops other than cotton. This agency of government is charged with the responsibility of mobilizing this reserve manpower on the land. However, the Farm Security Administration program is being curtailed by the Congress of the United States at a time when it should be extended.

Responsible for this attempt to prevent the mobilization of the resources of these people on the land is a powerful organization purporting to represent 168,000 farmers in the eleven southern states. It is well known that the leadership of this organization, the American Farm Bureau, is closely allied with those organizations of employers who have been conducting a "grass roots" campaign to discredit organized labor and destroy the confidence of the American people in the Administration. The American Farm Bureau leaders wish to see the Farm Security Administration abolished as an independent agency because they have not been successful in controlling its administration. The program of the Farm Bureau calls for the following:

1. A transfer of the Farm Security Administration's lending functions to the Farm Credit Administratoin.
2. That the farm and home management service of the Farm Security Administration be transferred to the State Extension Services.
3. The abolition of the regional offices of the Farm Security Administration.
4. That the program of Rural Rehabilitation be drastically curtailed on account of the war.
5. That no more loans for the purchase of farms by tenants be made.

To secure proof of the interests represented by the American Farm Bureau, we have made an investigation of the activities of this organization in the states of Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi. Our interviewers have secured sworn affidavits and signed statements from approximately 100 farmers who are or who have been members of the American Farm Bureau.

While our resources for making this survey were limited, we know that if a complete investigation was made by the government, thousands of cases identical with the ones we uncovered would be found in every state where the American Farm Bureau has membership. Further, we know that an investigation would demonstrate that the small farmer, tenant, sharecropper and farm laborer, Negro and white alike, are victims of a vicious racket operating in collusion with local and state officials of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the various State Agricultural Extension Services.

The purpose of this report is to show the methods of organizing and maintaining membership by the American Farm Bureau. For the protection of those who have made affidavits and statements, we are not making public names and addresses nor citing specific cases. These are being presented to officials in Washington with a request for an official investigation.

MEMBERSHIP FIGURES

In its report for 1941, the American Farm Bureau Federation claimed a membership of 168,474 paid up members in the southern states. The membership figures for Alabama were 37,611, for Arkansas 22,611, and for Mississippi 28,901. Dues payments are $2.00 per year in Alabama and Mississippi and $2.50 per year in Arkansas.

It may well be estimated that over 75 per cent of the membership of the American Farm Bureau in these states are low income farm families; small farmers, tenants and sharecroppers. However, the leadership of the organization is confined to the upper group of farm owners and the policies of the American Farm Bureau reflect their interests.

ORIGIN OF THE FARM BUREAU

The Farm Bureau was organized in a number of states by well to do farmers prior to the last world war for the purpose of securing the services of a trained agriculturist in each county. Thus, it became closely allied with the Agricultural Extension Services in each state. and with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Farm Bureau Federation in 1933 was, therefore, in a position to serve as a transmission belt for the new deal program for agriculture. The bulk of the membership was then as it is today, made up of members in the mid-western states. Only a few larger plantation owners in the south held membership in their county Farm Bureaus, but with the coming of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the development of provisions for democratic participation by all farmers who were affected by the program, there arose a need even in the south to build an organization to perpetuate the control of the few plantation owners who looked upon the AAA as an agency for relief of southern landlords.

THE OPERATION OF THE FARM BUREAU IN ALABAMA

In Alabama, Dr. L. N. Duncan, now President of the Alabama Polytechnical Institute and then also State Director of the Agricultural Extension Service, early saw the possibilities of the American Farm Bureau as a political instrument. Dr. Duncan advanced Edward A. O'Neal, who is the owner of a large plantation in Lauderdale County in the Tennessee River Valley in northern Alabama, and in 1931 O'Neal was elected National President of the American Farm Bureau Federation. In building the Farm Bureau, Dr. Duncan had as chief assistants, R. G. Arnold, now Southern Organization Director for the Farm Bureau, and Walter L. Randolph, the present Executive Secretary of the Alabama Farm Bureau. As Director of the Agricultural Extension Service, Dr. Duncan controlled approximately 250 key employees located in every county in the state, and with the coming of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration with an average of 30 AAA committeemen and other employees in each county paid with government funds, the foundation was laid for an organization that is today the most significant power in Alabama politics.

Utilizing these agencies, the Alabama Farm Bureau began a campaign to build a mass following among all classes of farmers, small owners, tenants and sharecroppers as well as large plantation owners. An arrangement had already been worked out by Edward A. O'Neal, with Dr. Morton of Tuskegee College for Negroes, for organizing colored farmers as well as whites. The Negroes were permitted to join on a Jim Crow basis. The County Agents, their assistants, AAA county and local committeemen all became organizers for the Farm Bureau on the side. Letters were sent out on official stationery and under frank of the U. S. Department of Agriculture soliciting membership. This was exposed in Alabama and other states in 1938 but the practice is still continued though a more guarded use is made of government stationery and franking privileges. Over a period of time, there was developed a check-off system of forcing farmers to pay Farm Bureau membership dues from AAA rental and parity checks. With variations, this method of building and maintaining membership is now utilized in all three states and largely explains the 168,474 paid up members in the eleven southern states.

By 1936, the Alabama Farm Bureau had approximately 20,000 members. Checking off $2.00 per year from each of those, there was on hand sufficient money to determine the outcome of campaigns for any office in Alabama that the leadership was interested in. In the Moore-Storrs race for State Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, the Farm Bureau allegedly spent over $26,000 in electing their man. A photostatic copy of a check for $2,000 paid to Cy Brown, the present Mayor of Montgomery, was printed in the Montgomery Advertiser in the year 1936. This was paid for lobbying through a measure the Farm Bureau was interested in seeing adopted in the State Legislature.

This year, the Farm Bureau is supporting one Joe N. Poole for State Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries and his opponent is as good as defeated before the polls open on May 5, 1942. (Note: Poole was elected.) No accounting is made of expenditures to the rank and file members of the Alabama Farm Bureau for the thousands of dollars collected each year. This system of taking money from honest farmers to build a political machine devoted to serving the interests of a few, if thoroughly investigated would be uncovered in Arkansas and Mississippi as well as Alabama.

METHODS OF ORGANIZING AND MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN ALABAMA

It is a practice of the County AAA offices to send representatives out to each community to deliver to farmers their AAA checks. The AAA representative is accompanied by an agent of the Farm Bureau with sufficient funds on hand to cash all checks. The Farm Bureau dues are then deducted and a receipt issued. If the farmer does not meet the AAA representative at the appointed time and place, which may be a plantation store or commissary or a rural schoolhouse, he must call at the office of the AAA in the county site for his check. The procedure there is as follows:

A farmer will come into the AAA office to secure his government check; he will then be

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SAVE A DIME—BUY A DEFENSE STAMP

Men Of The Land

By H. L. MITCHELL, Secretary

For two months now the Tenant Farmer has not appeared. This may be the last number unless we can get special funds to keep publishing it. If the worst comes and we have to suspend it permanently all members of the Union will get an occasional bulletin telling in so far as possible what is going on.

H. L. MITCHELL

Since February many things have happened. National Sharecroppers Week was held during March. While financial returns were fairly good, due to the war they amounted to much less than we had hoped. On March 21 the Executive Council met in Memphis and laid down a program for three months' work. How well this job has been done can be seen in the various news items contained in this paper, giving reports of the accomplishments.

President Raley, whose column tells you in part what he has been doing, has certainly shown the members of the STFU that he is not just a man with ideas but one who has the ability to put his ideas into action. Vice-President Betton and J. F. Hynds have both had their work doubled since we were not able to employ as many organizers as heretofore.

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asked if he does not want it cashed and if he is a white man, he is requested to pay his Farm Bureau dues, but if he is a Negro, he is told to endorse the check which is then handed over to the collector for the Farm Bureau who cashes the check and after deducting $2.00 for the membership dues, the balance is returned to the farmer. If he protests, he is often told that unless he pays, he will receive no more government benefit payments under AAA.

Another method of inducing payment of Farm Bureau dues is through the control of the distribution of fertilizer manufactured by the Tennessee Valley Authority through the County AAA Committee. The farmer is told that unless he is a member in good standing in the Bureau, he will not receive his share of the free TVA fertilizer, calcium and phosphate to use on his land.

METHODS OF ORGANIZING AND MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN ARKANSAS

In the eastern Arkansas counties along the Mississippi River, the Farm Bureau membership is higher than any other section of the state. Here the method employed for the collection of membership dues is through an involuntary check-off being made by the plantation owner from the tenants, sharecroppers and day laborers' crop accounts or wages. A large number of the eastern Arkansas tenants and sharecroppers are members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and resent being forced to pay dues in the Farm Bureau. The owners, however, overcome their objections by threatening to dispossess them from the land. In a number of cases, Arkansas farm families have been forced to move off the plantations because they refused to accept Farm Bureau membership. The planters welcome the organization of the Farm Bureau as a means of preventing bonafide organization of tenants and sharecroppers.

That the practice of deducting membership dues directly from the AAA checks did not prevail in Arkansas in 1941 as in Alabama is due, no doubt, to a ruling of the AAA State Committee that all such checks must be mailed direct to each person participating in the program.

In St. Francis County, Arkansas, the Farm Bureau, on January 25, 1942, reported a paid up membership of 2590 and there were only 705 farm owners in the entire county according to the 1940 census. The farm census also shows 1,030 tenant families and 1,000 sharecroppers. Though figures are not given for day laborers, there are approximately 2500 such families depending largely on wages earned in the cultivation and harvesting of the cotton crop. 71.5 per cent of all the farmers in St. Francis County, 56.9 per cent of all the tenants and 87.8 per cent of all the sharecroppers are Negroes.

That the majority of 2590 members of the American Farm Bureau are Negroes is evident. Of those interviewed in St. Francis County, not one reported ever having attended a meeting. They had never taken part in an election for officers, nor had any voice in determining policies or programs of the organization in which they constituted the majority. The same situation exists in the states of Mississippi and Alabama and applies not only to Negroes but to the poor white farmers, tenants and sharecroppers as well.

METHODS OF ORGANIZING AND MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN MISSISSIPPI

In the State of Mississippi, the methods of operation of the Farm Bureau vary slightly from those prevailing in Alabama. Here as in Arkansas, the most effective means of collecting Farm Bureau dues is by having each plantation owner check off $2.00 from each man's wages if he is a day laborer, or if he is a sharecropper to charge the amount to the commissary account.

However, the Mississippi Farm Bureau also utilizes the check off system of collecting dues from AAA checks. Here as in Alabama representatives of the AAA County Office and the Farm Bureau make a practice of distributing, cashing and deducting dues from government checks at the plantation commissaries. Often the owner is present when the tenant or sharecropper receives his government money and often claims the balance due from the check to apply on back debts regardless of whether or not an assignment has been made.

In the six Delta counties of Mississippi, Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman, Sunflower, Tunica, and Washington, the Farm Bureau reported in 1941 a membership of 19,000 or approximately one half the membership of 28,901 in the state. The farm census figures for 1940 show that from 73 to 91 per cent of the farm population in these six counties is Negro. It has been charged that 13,000 of those members are colored sharecroppers or day laborers whose dues have been checked off by the plantation owners for whom they work. It is also known that blocks of membership cards are purchased by banks, stores and other business establishments in this section. It has been admitted by Farm Bureau officials that there were signs hung in the county AAA offices which read as follows: "Pay Your Farm Bureau Dues Here—The Farm Bureau is responsible for getting your AAA Payments—"

With the price of long staple cotton high as in 1941, the Delta plantation owner is often at a loss as how to keep his records so that he may collect all the money due a sharecropper. A new method of charging for supervision in addition to regular interest rates of 10c on the dollar has been introduced to get around the laws against usury. The investigator working in Mississippi uncovered cases on a plantation where a 17% supervision charge was imposed on the sharecroppers' credit account. It is also a widespread practice for landlords to arrange with a ginner to charge his tenants an extra amount for ginning the cotton and then rebate the owner for the difference in the established price. Also, tenants are allowed less for their cotton and cotton seed than is paid independent operators.

SAVE A DIME—BUY A DEFENSE STAMP

'Organizing The Farm Bureau'

A PLAY BY J. F. HYNDS

Place: On a Plantation in Arkansas. Time: Early in the Spring after plowing is started.
Characters: Planter, Mr. Bootcher. Victim: A Negro Sharecropper named John.

* * *

Bootcher: Say, John, step over here a minute, got a paper want ye to sign.

John: What dat fur, Boss?

Bootcher: O' jis for the Farm Bureau.

John: I don't no nuthing bout dat Buro, Boss.

Bootcher: It the thing for all us farmers to join.

John: Maybe tis good for all yol big white folks but us pore black folks and white folks what has to work fur a livin, I don't see what good it do us.

Bootcher: Yes its good for all of us, we all join together where you help us and we help you.

John: O' you means we hep you fust and then you gonna hep us?

Bootcher: That's right John.

John: Boss, I thought thats what we been doin all the time aint dat de reason we ain't got nuthin today. Is yo Farm Bureau like a Union?

Bootcher: Yes, its like a union John, we got nearly half million people in the South all signed up.

John: Boss, didn't you sine me up in that Buro last yeah and the yeah befo?

Bootcher: Yes, I did John and see what a big crop you made?

John: Dats show right, I made 22 bales cotton, but whut did you do with it, Boss? I didn't git nuthin out of my hole crop. But I guess I see what de Buro is, we hep you with de crop till its done in December den you hep us on the Welfare up town fer Christmas.

Bootcher: John its like this, the Bureau helps us get better prices for cotton. The Bureau gets your parity and rental money. If you don't belong you don't get any government money.

John: Well dat don't soun right to me, you member I had a shear crop las yeah and you sine me up as a day hand so you could git all dat gov-ment money. The Tenant Union got behine you and had you twistin fur awhile, till the government straightened it out and I got what was mine. Doan look lack that Buro doin right, I think de STF and U de best thing dat dare is for us pore folks. They got us our gov-ment checks brot right to us by de mail man and put in our box. Fore dat you uster take our checks, cash em, deduct dis and deduct dat until de ducks done got it all.

Bootcher: O' hell nigger I ain't got no more time to argue with you, either you join the Farm Bureau or move right now. Why the devil did they stop sendin the government check to me, it was a lot easier to just deduct $2.50 then but here I am wasting my time arguing with a fool nigger who don't know whats good for him. You move by Monday morning, all my labors got to belong to the Farm Bureau or else I can't borrow money to farm on.

John: Well I guess I just got to move. Boss, dats whut I wuz doin when I wuz born and I ain't never had a chance to stop yet.

ALABAMA STFU MEMBERS SET UP CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

(Continued from Page 1)

from farmers who are in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. There are 18,000 organized workers in the American Federation of Labor Unions in the Muscle Shoals area, all of whom are potential customers of the co-operative association. The association plans to establish a headquarters in Sheffield in the near future and operate a curb market.

President's Column

By ROY E. RALEY

The first of March my successor as Business Agent of the Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers Union took over the job I had held for four years in Sheffield and I started to work full time for the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

Along with H. L. Mitchell I went up to Washington and New York for National Sharecroppers Week. I met a lot of people who are friends of the Union. It was my privilege to call on some government officials and labor leaders while in Washington.

Going up on the train Mitchell and I discussed the co-operative buying that was being done in Alabama and the possibilities of setting up a co-operative association to sell the products of Union members as well. Since there are thousands of people working in the Muscle Shoals War Industries it seemed to me that we had a good market right at home. Upon my return to Alabama I started canvassing the merchants, hotels and restaurant owners. Most of them are working under contract with the A. F. of L. Unions and I found that they were ready to deal with the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. We drew up a contract and about 30 of these business men signed up to buy all their products direct from the farmers who are members of our Union. I also began acting as the agent for the Alabama locals in buying of seed, feed and fertilizers and other supplies for the members direct from the wholesale houses.

During the months of March and April we bought $2,258 worth of goods and the savings to the ones who were buying amounted to $308.50. I also helped them sell about 800 dozen eggs and about 100 fryers, these brought much better prices than could have been gotten from buyers who go through the country buying up things from farmers.

As you see I have had my hands full for the past two months though I have managed to get over into Arkansas and to Missouri for several mass meetings. I haven't had the time to get in and work in all of the states as I wanted to do.

Now we have set up the Alabama Farmers Co-operative Association and soon plan to open headquarters in Sheffield. Once this is done I will have more time to spend away from this district. I hope all of you will understand that we are very short handed in the Union nowadays, we can't use our cars and tires like we used to do and it's even getting hard to travel on a train or bus.

I am getting good reports from Arkansas and the other states and I am glad to see the Co-operative starting in Arkansas. We will get one going in Missouri and Mississippi before fall, too. People are looking us up down here in Alabama, begging to join the STFU where we had to beg them to join last year.

PLANTERS REFUSE TENANTS

(Continued from Page 1)

all farm people available for employment be registered and that a distinction be made between those who could work locally and those willing to move. And that when it became necessary the regular farm people could become the basis of a Volunteer American Army of Farm Laborers, drawing into its ranks young workers out of school and college as well as older people from the towns and cities all to be employed at wages set by a federal minimum wage law.

Is This the Last Issue of The Tenant Farmer?

A year ago this little newspaper made its first appearance. We called it "A Venture in Faith." It was needed, we knew, and we had nothing to depend on but faith to see the venture through. For ten months it came out more or less regularly, but for the last two months we haven't had the money to pay the printing and mailing costs. We had hoped that a special grant would be made us to continue publication but we have just learned that our application was turned down flat. So we have nothing we can depend on to insure future publication. We are getting out this issue in the hopes that our readers will help keep the Tenant Farmer going.

We have a list of nearly 5,000 to whom it is mailed. No less than 25,000 people look forward to its coming each month. There may be more than that who read it, we don't know. We only know that it passes from hand to hand, from cabin to cabin, in the cotton fields of seven Southern states. It's about the only source of reliable information many of its readers have here in the South. We always try to present news that will be of value to the lowest of low income farm people.

It's war time now, printing costs have gone up, mailing costs also went up as our circulation increased. The cost of publication is now nearly $200 per month whereas a year ago we figured on it costing us only $100 per month.

We know that among our friends and supporters there are many people who believe in the kind of education that the Tenant Farmer is doing. If a few will make us a substantial contribution toward publication of this paper then we will publish it just as long as the money will last. We still have Faith that these friends will see us through. If we get no response to this appeal it will be the end of the Tenant Farmer and it will be missed in many places. It's needed today even more than a year ago.

Tire Rationing on the Farm

Rubber and other materials for recapping old tires are rationed as well as new tires. The use that a farmer makes of his car or truck is the basis for deciding who can buy new tires and tubes and who can have old tires recapped.

Who Can Buy New Tires?

A farmer who uses his truck to carry farm products to market and to take home supplies needed on the farm may be permitted to buy new tires and tubes. No new tires are allowed farmers who sell products house to house.

Who Can Buy Recapped Tires?

Farmers who use their cars to haul produce to market may be eligible. Farmers who use their trucks for important purposes other than those that make them eligible to purchase new tires. Technicians, people who are working with farmers and using their cars to travel to and from farms engaged in producing for war purposes may also secure recapped tires.

Rationing of tires is handled by local boards in each county. To get tires a person has to apply to his local board. They decide who may or may not buy tires. A person who believes he is entitled to tires applies to his local tire rationing board and if he is turned down he may appeal to the State Administrator who is empowered to make necessary adjustments. If he does not get satisfaction there he may petition the Office of Price Administration in Washington.

Co-operative Set Up In Arkansas

Eighteen representatives of Union locals in Arkansas met in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, on the evening of May 12th to discuss a plan for co-operative purchasing and marketing.

This action followed the establishment of a co-operative association by members of the STFU in Alabama. By-laws were adopted for the Arkansas Farmers Co-operative Association, a Board of Directors was elected and a charter under the laws of the State of Arkansas applied for. Members of the Board of Directors are J. F. Hynds of Forrest City, Robert Capshaw of McClelland, F. R. Betton of Cotton Plant, M. J. Jones of Shady Grove, and Henry Roberson of Peach Orchard Bluff.

In the discussion prior to the formation of the Co-operative Association it was brought to light that among the problems faced by members of the Union in Arkansas, who are independent operating tenants and sharecroppers, is that of disposing of surplus farm products they are raising this year under the Food for Freedom program. A market must be provided for the increased production of food crops such as vegetables, poultry and etc., that these members are raising on plantations heretofore devoted entirely to cotton growing.

Since 1934 members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union have been buying their supplies through clubs or pools formed in their locals. It was therefore proposed to centralize this co-operative purchasing through the Association.

The first purchase will be made about May 24th, according to F. R. Betton, who is acting as manager of the Association. Betton also announced that members of the Union who wish to join the association may secure application blanks from their local secretary. One dollar membership fee may be paid to the Local Secretary and the Secretary will then send the application and the dollar into the Treasurer of the Association, M. J. Jones, Route 2, Box 135, Forrest City, Arkansas. Members who have paid their fee of $1.00 will then be entitled to buy and sell their products through the Association. Orders for supplies will then be taken up at each local, and goods bought at wholesale prices and delivered at a convenient place.

A handling charge of 5c on the dollar will be charged for all things purchased through the Association. A similar charge of 10% or 10c on the dollar will be made for marketing a member's products. All funds beyond the actual cost of the handling of goods bought and sold through the association will be refunded to each member in proportion to the amount of business he does through his association. Dividends will be paid quarterly.

It is provided in the by-laws that only members in good standing in the Southern Tenant Farmers Union may secure the benefits of co-operative buying and marketing in the Association.

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